

Letter and enclosure from Alexander Graham Bell to Rudolph Kauffmann, undated, with transcript

HELEN KELLER. Drawer 25 Copy of a letter-press copy of a letter from ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL about Helen's intellectual acquirements, and enclosing a manuscript written by President Gilman. (Was this Mr. Rudolph Kauffmann of The Evening Star??) Dear Mr. Kauffmann:

You probably know of Miss Helen Keller who, like Laura Bridgeman, was blind and deaf (and consequently dumb) from infancy. This little girl is now my guest for a few days accompanied by her teacher Miss Sullivan. Her mental attainments have surpassed anything that has been known before in the world. In addition to thorough familiarity with written English she has acquired the ability to speak intelligibly. This evening I gave a dinner party to Senator Sherman and other guests. After dinner, number of the gentleman expressed a wish to see Helen. Helen came down into the parlor accompanied by her teacher, Miss Sullivan. Prof. Newcomb and other guests plied her with scientific questions concerning the retundity of the earth etc., and concerning her conception of geometrical relations. The results were so remarkable that President Gilman of Johns Hopkins University thought that some account of the meeting should be published and wrote the enclosed manuscript for that purpose which I have great pleasure in forwarding to you as I have no doubt that you would like to publish it in the Evening Star.

The sentiment proposed in honor of Senator Sherman's 70th birthday was an impromptu utterance and was spoken by Helen viva voce in a most touching manner.

Besides Senator Sherman the following gentlemen were present:

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Senator Merrill, Prof. Langley, Prof. Gilbert, Maj. Powell, Prof. A. G. Bell, Prof. Gilman, (of Baltimore), The Danish Minister, Mr. G. G. Hubbard, Mr. Pollok, President Gallaudet, Prof. Newcomb, and Colonel Briton.

Yours very truly, Alexander Graham Bell. (see the following page)

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Copy of article by President Gilman of Johns Hopkins University, on HELEN KELLER, and referred to by Alexander Graham Bell in his letter to Mr. Kauffman, of The Washington Evening Star — letter undated Helen Keller, Drawer 25

Miss Helen Keller, who may be regarded as the most remarkable person in this country when her natural deficiencies are compared with her graces and gifts, is now a guest at the house of Mr. Alexander Graham Bell in this city. Last evening a number of well known gentlemen were also his guests and had an opportunity to see how extraordinary is the intelligence of this young lady and how more marvellous is her power of expression, not only by manual signs but also by distinct and agreeable oral utterances.

Among the guests was Senator Sherman. Professor Bell said to Helen, "This is the birthday of Senator Sherman and we are going to drink his health. We want you to propose a toast. Do you know what that means?" As this was a new idea to the young lady, it was explained to her. "We want you to propose a sentiment in honor of this birthday", said Professor Bell. Helen looked puzzled or thoughtful for a minute and then said slowly and with a sympathetic emphasis.

"I propose his health, happiness and prosperity. May he be as helpful to this country in the future as he has been in the past, and may he be blessed with all good things in this life, and in the beautiful life to come".

During the evening the quickness and fitness of her answers to Professor Newcomb and other scientific gentlemen surprised every body. So did her accurate repetition of

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Longfellow's "Psalm of Life"; and so did her keen enjoyment of the stories told her and of the conundrums with which she puzzled the friends who were talking with her. Her story is wonderful, and the skill of her teacher, Miss Sullivan, is admirable in the highest degree.